

PEOPLE & THINGS

WHILE officially there is a worsening of relations between Gibraltar, bedecked for the arrival of the Queen tomorrow, and the slogan-scarred "Campo" area across the border in Spain, beneath the surface there is intense and for the most part friendly interest in the Royal visitors.

Unfortunately, and surely quite by chance, a new Military Governor of Algeiras was appointed by General Franco just in time for the Royal visit. General Jose Guesta Moreno has already established a reputation for being chilly towards the British, and his relations with General Sir Gordon MacMillan, the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Gibraltar, are far from achieving the traditional spirit of cordiality between the two ports.

Monkey Business

HIS predecessor, General Antonio Barroso Sanchezgurrá, who was relieved of his post (as luck would have it) just after the Royal visit had been announced, was on the other hand an outstandingly sociable and charming man. The two Governors were on Christian-name terms and sealed their friendship by frequent exchanges of manure from the Spanish Cavalry Barracks for the gardens of Government House, and cases of whisky for the household at Algeiras.

Spanish Army officers in the "Campo" have suggested to some of their British colleagues that a token surrender of British property might be contrived in time to allow them to take part in the festivities and cheer the Queen. The Spanish Officers should be allowed to kidnap the senior of the Rock apes. Having triumphantly despatched the animal to Madrid they would secretly replace it with a prize Barbary ape from Spanish Morocco. The Rock, they insist, is, of course, Spanish, and "quien se calla, se otorga" (he who keeps silent admits guilt), but it is the gesture that matters.

An Aircraft Museum

THE private collection of "Steam Age" aircraft belonging to Mr. R. G. J. Nash has been bought by the Royal Aeronautical Society and will be shown at the Society's garden party at London Airport on June 13.

In the exhibition will be a 1913 Bleriot of the type used by Bleriot on the first Channel flight, a 1913 Maurice Farman—a French "pusher" design, with the engine at the rear—and one of the Sopwith Camels, the famous fighter planes of the 1914-18 war.

There are plans, supported by Mr. Peter Masefield, of B.E.A., to create a permanent aircraft museum which may become to future generations what the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich is to us.

Historic Junk

UNFORTUNATELY it is given to only a few men such as Sir Winston Churchill to have a historical sense about the present, and B.O.A.C. are even now shame-

By ATTICUS

faced at having actually burned one of the gems of English aeroplane history—the hull of the only remaining example of the Supermarine Sea Eagle amphibian.

This aircraft was used on the first Southampton-Guernsey air service in 1923. Its hull was stored at Heston and forgotten until located by an enthusiast who was making plans to salvage it when B.O.A.C. officials came across the hull and had it burned.

This accident is a sad blow to the aircraft historian since the next latest British transport plane is ten years younger, a 1933 Dragon flown by Highland Airways.



Detail from the portrait by Douglas Glaze

T. S. Eliot, O.M.

I AM glad to report that Mr. T. S. Eliot has made a complete recovery from the effects of overstrain which he incurred after his South African visit. He returned to Chelsea last Tuesday from the London Clinic, bearing with him some of the spoils of the sick-room—a towering rubber plant, Miss Margaret Leighton's present of a miniature garden (installed in a handsome celadon entrée dish) and no end of Stilton cheese.

He will be spending the rest of the month in the country before taking his elder sister for a seaside holiday. "The Confidential Clerk," which is still playing to packed houses in New York, ended its London run of eight months a week ago. Mr. Eliot has no plans as yet for a new play. For the time being he is obediently carrying out his doctor's instructions to take it easy.

More Clochemerle

IT was in the spring of 1934 that the first rumours of a really funny French novel began to reach this country. And it was not long before "Clochemerle," with its rude provincial humours and irresistible central joke, became a best-seller throughout the world.

Gabriel Chevallier has taken twenty years to produce a sequel, and I hear that during that time the village of Clochemerle itself, like most of the rest of the world, has taken a turn for the worse. "Clochemerle-Babylone" is due to appear in Paris at the end of this month, and I imagine that Chevallier's English translator will soon be at work not only on our old friends the Curé Ponsosse and Barthélemy Piéchut, but on the many new characters who illustrate the decline of the once-respectable village into "a place of perdition, a veritable Babylon of decadence."

A Concrete Issue

ONE would have thought that the Second Annual Congress of the International Federation of Press Cutting Agencies, which

has just opened in Milan, would be a peaceful, almost a drowsy affair, but here also there is schism between nations. The burning issue at Milan is whether "clippies" should be paid by fixed wage or piece-rate.

England, in the shape of Mr. Geoffrey Durrant-Wright, the owner of Durrant's Press Cuttings, will press for the former, and he will quote the example of the "stakhanovite" clippie who sent a customer interested in "concrete," cuttings of all speeches referring to "concrete suggestions."

The Teapot Conspiracy

INCIDENTALLY, Durrant's are as busy as they have ever been and employ over a hundred girls at their Mount Pleasant headquarters, but they no longer thrive mostly on the egos of authors, journalists, painters, actors and politicians. Now their biggest customers are the P.R.O.s of big firms and the advertising agencies.

They still get occasional wild-card inquiries which must cause a ripple of excitement as they are announced to the girls over the loud-speaker system. For instance: Anything About Mice Found in Teapots.

By the way, Mr. Durrant-Wright collects cuttings about cuttings, so here is one for his collection.

Fleurs Du Mall

IT occurred to me to inquire whether the choice of flowers planted in the beds facing Buckingham Palace is ever influenced by the wishes of Queen Elizabeth. But the answer is that Her Majesty never interferes with the choice of Mr. T. C. Barbour, Superintendent of Hyde Park and St. James's Park, and he has nothing to guide him since the Queen has wisely never expressed any floral tastes and is only known to dislike receiving flowers which have been wired.

For this reason, and because, as he wistfully puts it, "anything round the Victoria Memorial would be trampled to death by the crowds," Mr. Barbour made no special planting to greet the Queen, and there would normally have been a touch of unwisdom in his choice of tulips—yellow in the centre and red round the borders—for had the weather been seasonable they would have made a sorry show on May 15.

But Mr. Barbour's green fingers extend even to the heavens. The tulips have been retarded by the cold and will be looking their very best throughout this week.

Festive Ghouls

THE origins of the "Worst Play" of the Month Club "are buried in the time-capsule that contains all the other bright rag-bag of the Gay Twenties, but most of the undergraduates who founded it and who survived the war held their first dinner for fifteen years at Brooks's last Tuesday. The following representatives of the Gay Twenties were present:

Mr. Nigel Birch (Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Defence).

Mr. Gilbert Debenham (Psychologist).

Mr. Peter Fleming (Author).

Mr. Heywood Hill (Bookseller).

Lord Hinchinbrooke (Member of Parliament).

Mr. Ralph Jarvis (Merchant Banker).

Mr. Samuel Lloyd (Chairman of Brooks's).

Much to the relief of the members, the traditionally Lucullan dinner did not have to be curtailed by a dash to catch the curtain rising upon some grisly Act 1, since no play at present running in London was considered worthy of the Club's accolade—nothing, for instance, to compare with the only "worst play" they remembered—the 1929 Basil Dean production of "Beau Geste" with Laurence Olivier.